

Downham Rural District

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

YEAR 1950

Including the Reports of the Senior Sanitary Inspector
(Mr. H. W. Nowell, Assoc. M.C.T., M.S.I.A.)

and the Surveyor and Water Engineer
(Mr. H. Blakey)

DR. C. T. DARWENT, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.

Downham Rural District Council

Members of the Public Health Committee

Chairman: Mr. H. G. Teverson

Mr. W. Addison	Mr. H. J. Martin
Mr. S. Bailey	Rev. A. S. D. Page
Mr. E. Barker	Col. E. R. Pratt
Mr. W. H. Bentley	Mr. F. Starling
Mr. A. P. Deck	Mr. M. Stocks
Mr. A. Dye	Mr. C. W. Thornhill
Mr. H. Gates	Mr. S. F. L. Warner
Mr. F. Green	Mr. R. R. Wilde
Mrs. F. S. Hopkins	Mr. G. G. Wright
Mr. H. Leonard	

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council are ex-officio members of the Committee.

Public Health Officers of the Local Authority

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Dr. C. T. Darwent, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.

Also holds the appointments of:—

Asst. County Medical Officer of Health

Asst. County School Medical Officer

Medical Officer of Health to Marshland Rural District

Medical Officer of Health to Downham Urban District.

SANITARY INSPECTOR

H. W. Nowell, Assoc. M.C.T., M.S.I.A.

ADDITIONAL SANITARY INSPECTOR

D. N. Rowsell, M.S.I.A.

CLERK TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

J. Osler.

STOKE FERRY,

June, 1951

To The Chairman and Members of the Rural District
Council of Downham

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is again my pleasure to submit for your observations my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1950.

The report is augmented by the inclusion of reports for the above period by your Senior Sanitary Inspector and your Surveyor and Water Engineer respectively.

The general health of your District is quite satisfactory, as evidenced by the Birth and Death Rates.

For statistical purposes all members of H.M. Forces are now included in the resident population.

The comparability factor as given by the Registrar General is 1.07 for Births and 0.97 for Deaths.

The number of notified infectious diseases for the year in question is double that of 1949 which is accounted for by the widespread epidemics of Measles and Whooping Cough.

I tender my appreciation for the support and guidance afforded me by the Members of the Council, the Clerk and the Officers of the various departments in carrying out my duties.

I have the honour to be,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

C. T. DARWENT,

Medical Officer of Health.

SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS, 1950

Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	...	124,152
Population, 1931 Census	...	...	...	...	...	15,503
Population, 1950	...	...	...	...	...	22,580
Number of separate dwellings occupied, 1950	...	...	...	...	approx.	6,387
Rateable Value, 1950	...	...	...	...	£	70,088
Product of a Penny Rate, 1949	...	...	...	...	£290 4s. 11d.	

LIVE BIRTHS				Rate		
	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural D.	England & Wales	Administrative County
Legitimate	397	199	198	17.58		
Illegitimate	23	10	13	1.02		
	420	209	211	18.6	15.8	15.85

STILL BIRTHS (Rate per 1,000, Live and Still Births)						
	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural D.	England & Wales	Administrative County
Legitimate	7	6	1	16.3		
Illegitimate	—	—	—	—		
	7	6	1	16.3	—	20.59

DEATHS (all causes)			Rate			
	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural D.	England & Wales	Administrative County
	251	125	126	11.12	11.6	11.46

DEATHS from Puerperal Causes

Puerperal and post-Abortive Sepsis	...	...	...	Nil
Other Puerperal causes	...	...	...	Nil

INFANT MORTALITY (Rate per 1,000 Live Births)

				Rate		
	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural D.	Administrative County	
Legitimate	18	12	6	42.8		
Illegitimate	—	—	—	—		
	18	12	6	42.8		25.72

DEATHS FROM

Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	38
Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	1
Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	...	...	1

SECTION A

Natural and Social Conditions

Area (acres)	...	...	...	...	...	124,152
Population	...	...	...	...	...	22,580

DEATHS. The total number assigned to the District by the Registrar-General after adjustment for inward and outward transfers—was 251, as compared with 266 in 1949. The death rate equals 11.12 per 1,000 of the resident population.

BIRTHS. The number (420) shows a slight increase over the year 1949. The birth rate of 18.6 is also higher.

MATERNAL MORTALITY. The maternal mortality figure is again Nil—which is most satisfactory.

INFANT MORTALITY. Eighteen infants under one year of age died during 1950. The infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births, equals 42.8, which is unfortunately high. Fourteen of the 18 infants were, however, under 4 weeks old.

SECTION B

1. GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES

Norfolk Executive Council, 54 Prince of Wales' Road,
Norwich. *Clerk*—R. J. Cobb, Esq.

2. EAST ANGLIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL BOARD

Senior Administrative Medical Officer:—

Dr. J. B. Ewen, M.D., D.P.H.,
Croft-Holme, 117 Chesterton Road,
Cambridge.

(a) GENERAL

- (i) Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, Norwich.
- (ii) West Norfolk & King's Lynn Hospital, King's Lynn
- (iii) Jenny Lind Hospital, Norwich.
- (iv) St. James' Hospital, King's Lynn (for chronic sick).
- (v) The Howdale Home, Downham Market.

(b) MATERNITY

- (i) West Norfolk & King's Lynn Hospital (Maternity Unit)
- (ii) Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge.

(c) INFECTIOUS

- (i) County Isolation Hospital, East Dereham.
- (ii) Isolation Hospital, King's Lynn.

(d) SANATORIA

- (i) Kelling Sanatorium, Holt.
- (ii) Bramblewood Sanatorium, Holt.

(e) MENTAL

- (i) St. Andrew's Hospital, Norwich.
- (ii) Hellesdon Hospital, Norwich.
- (iii) Heckingham Hospital, Norwich.
- (iv) Little Plumstead, Norwich.

3. MATERNITY SERVICES

(a) DISTRICT NURSES (showing Parishes and Villages served):

Nurse Gerrard,		Feltwell
High Street, Feltwell, Thetford		Hockwold
Nurse Hunns,		
Lower Green, Methwold, Thetford		Methwold
Nurse Smith,		Wimbotsham
Nurse's Cottage, Stow, King's Lynn		Stow
Nurse Porter,		
Nurse's Home, Nordelph		Nordelph
Nurse Nelson,		Watlinglington
6 Council Houses,		Wormegay
Station Road,		Tottenhill
Watlington, King's Lynn		South Runcton
Nurse Walker,		Stoke Ferry
Rose Cottage, Stoke Ferry, K. Lynn		Whittington
Nurse Mosley,		Wiggenhall St.
18 Council Houses,		Mary Virgin
Wiggenhall St. Germans,		Wiggenhall St.
King's Lynn		Germans, Wiggenhall St. Mary
		Magdalen
		Marham
Nurse Horn,		Shouldham
27 Barton Bendish,		Shouldham
King's Lynn		Thorpe, Stradsett, Fincham
		Barton Bendish
Nurse Russell,		Denver, Ryston
High Street, Hilgay,		Fordham
Downham Market		Hilgay
Nurse Robinson,		
Nurse's Bungalow, Southcry		Southery
Downham Market		
		Crimplesham
Nurse Addis,		West Dereham
Crimplesham,		Wereham
King's Lynn		Boughton
		Wretton

(b) MATERNITY. Beds in Regional Hospital Board Establishments.

(i) Stow Hall Maternity Home, Stow Bardolph.

4. AMBULANCE AND HOSPITAL CAR SERVICE

This is a County Council function and is controlled by the Joint Ambulance Committee. It is worked on an Agency basis by the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John and W.V.S.

The Downham Rural Area is jointly served by the Downham Market, King's Lynn and Thetford Ambulances. Infectious Disease cases are conveyed by East Dereham and King's Lynn Infectious Disease Ambulances.

5. RED CROSS MEDICAL LOAN DEPOTS

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| (a) Wiggenhall St. Germans | Mrs. Richer |
| (b) Watlington | Mrs. Thomas |
| (c) Fincham | Mrs. F. Brown |
| (d) Downham Market | Mrs. I. Burbeck |

6. COUNTY MEDICAL SERVICES

(a) INFANT WELFARE CENTRES

- (i) Downham Market
- (ii) Outwell
- (iii) Methwold

The Assistant County Medical Officer of Health attends at the above sessions.

In addition, Village Infant Welfare Centres are held monthly at the following villages: Fincham, Hockwold, Hilgay, Northwold, Shouldham, Southery, Stow, Stoke Ferry, Watlington, Welney, West Dereham, Magdalen, Wornegay and Feltwell.

(b) SCHOOL MINOR AILMENTS CLINICS

Downham C.P. (Mixed) School (every Wednesday during term)

(c) SCHOOL DENTAL CLINIC

Downham C.P. Primary (closed—no Dental Officer available)

(d) HOME HELP SERVICE

The County Home Help Scheme is doing excellent work and Home Helps are at present available for the following Parishes and Villages: Feltwell, Hockwold, Northwold, Stoke Ferry, Wreham, West Dereham, Stow Bardolph, Watlington, Magdalen, St. Germans, Methwold, Denver, Ten Mile Bank, Southery and Hilgay.

7. VENEREAL DISEASE CLINIC

West Norfolk and King's Lynn Hospital:

Tuesdays & Fridays	Tuesdays & Wednesdays
Males	Female & Children
7 p.m.	at 3 p.m.

8. DISINFECTION AND DISINFESTATION

- (i) Disinfection of premises is carried out by the Senior Sanitary Inspector's staff.
- (ii) Disinfestation of bedding, clothing, etc., which cannot be carried out by this department, are sent to the East Dereham Isolation Hospital.

9. LABORATORY SERVICES

- (a) Public Health Laboratory,
Isolation Hospital,
Bowthorpe Road,
Norwich.

Under the direction of Dr. I. M. Dowsett.

- (b) Public Analyst:
W. Lincoln Sutton, Esq., F.R.I.C.,
Redwell Street,
Norwich.

SECTION C

Prevalence of and Control Over Infectious and other Diseases

SMALLPOX

NO cases were notified.

SCARLET FEVER

Eight cases were notified during the year as compared with thirteen in 1949. One of the new cases was removed to Isolation Hospital.

DIPHThERIA

NO cases were notified. Although this most satisfactory state exists, it would be false and dangerous for parents and guardians of the young to lose sight of the great importance of inoculation against diphtheria—the rapid decline and low incidence rate of this disease has only too clearly been produced by the protective measure of immunisation.

DIPHThERIA IMMUNISATION

This is carried out chiefly by the family doctor, but a small percentage of children are immunised at the Infant Welfare Centres.

Under 1 yr.	1 yr.	2 yrs	3 yrs.	4 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-14 yrs	Mid 1950 / Child Population
11	94	173	342	345	1303	1238	0-4 yrs 1938 5-14 yrs 3140

Total Immunised 3506—69.04 per cent.

PNEUMONIA

Eighteen cases of primary pneumonia were notified. There were five deaths.

ERYSIPELAS

Seven cases of erysipelas were notified, the ages ranging from 45 to 65 years and over.

MEASLES

The number of cases notified shows a very marked increase over the previous year, 454 cases as against 215 in 1949. The age group most affected was five years, and the monthly incidence rate was highest during February, May, June and July.

INFECTIVE JAUNDICE

There were 26 cases notified, and these are of seasonal interest as they occurred in the cold or cooler months of the year—September to January—and the age groups affected varied from 3 years to 45 years.

ACUTE POLIOMYELITIS

Three cases were notified in the District during 1950—two females and one male. The ages respectively were 34 years, 6 years and 2 years. The two females were both paralytic type cases—the elder of whom is still in Hospital in Newmarket. The source of infection was baffling and could not be traced. The little girl lived in an isolated Fenland farm and had not been away from home for over two months.

TUBERCULOSIS

Thirteen cases of Pulmonary and two of non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified during 1950. There were two deaths—one from Pulmonary disease and one from non-Pulmonary.

The following table indicates the incidence of Tuberculosis in the District:

T.B. all forms			Rate per 1,000 population Downham R.D.	County rate
Male	Female	Total		
4	9	13	0.57	0.89

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

Old Welney V.P. School was closed from the 31st January to the 17th February, 1950, on account of Measles and Chicken Pox being prevalent amongst the children. Northwold Infants School was closed from the 1st February to the 7th February, 1950, and Fordham V.P. School from the 16th February to the 22nd February, 1950, both on account of high incidence of Measles. Wereham C.P. School was closed from the 20th March to the 25th March, 1950, as many children were affected with Influenzal Colds and Infective Jaundice.

SECTION D

Table No. I

STATISTICAL TABLES, 1950

CAUSES OF DEATH

Causes of Death					MALE	FEMALES	TOTAL
1	Tuberculosis, respiratory	...	...	...	—	1	1
2	Tuberculosis, other	...	...	...	1	—	1
3	Syphilitic diseases	...	...	...	—	—	—
4	Diphtheria	...	...	...	—	—	—
5	Whooping Cough	...	...	...	—	—	—
6	Meningococcal infections	...	...	...	—	—	—
7	Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	—	—	—
8	Measles	...	...	...	—	1	1
9	Other infective and parasitic diseases	...	...	...	1	1	2
10	Malignant Neoplasm, stomach	...	...	...	8	6	14
11	Malignant Neoplasm, lung, Bronchus	...	...	...	1	1	2
12	Malignant Neoplasm, breast	...	...	...	—	3	3
13	Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	...	...	...	—	3	3
14	Other Malignant Lymphatic and Neoplasm	...	...	...	8	8	16
15	Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	...	...	...	—	2	2
16	Diabetes	...	...	...	1	1	2
17	Vascular lesions of nervous system	...	...	...	9	17	26
18	Coronary disease, angina	...	...	...	15	10	25
19	Hypertension with heart disease	...	...	...	3	4	7
20	Other heart diseases	...	...	...	27	30	57
21	Other Circulatory diseases	...	...	...	8	5	13
22	Influenza	...	...	...	—	1	1
23	Pneumonia	...	...	...	3	2	5
24	Bronchitis	...	...	...	7	6	13
25	Other diseases of the Respiratory system	...	...	...	3	2	5
26	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	...	1	—	1
27	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	...	...	...	1	—	1
28	Nephritis, Nephrosis	...	...	...	—	—	—
29	Hyperplasia of Prostrate	...	...	...	—	1	1
30	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	...	...	...	—	2	2
31	Congenital Malformations	...	...	...	—	—	—
32	Other defined and ill defined diseases	...	...	...	14	15	29
33	Motor vehicle accidents	...	...	...	—	1	1
34	All other accidents	...	...	...	11	6	17
35	Suicide	...	...	...	—	1	1
36	Homicide and operations of war	...	...	...	—	—	—
					126	125	251

Table No. 2

Causes of Death of Children Under One Year, 1950

Causes of Death	AGE IN WEEKS					
	1	2	3	4	5—52	Total
I. Congenital Malformations	2					2
II. Diseases of Early Infancy ...						
(a) Congenital Debility ...	2		1			3
(b) Premature Birth ...	5					5
(c) Injury at Birth ...						
(d) Atelectasis ...	2					2
(e) Others ...						
III. Diseases of Respiratory System	1				2	3
IV. Diseases of Nervous System						
V. Diseases of Digestive System		1			1	2
VI. Tuberculosis Disease ...						
VII. Infectious Disease ...						
VIII. Syphilis ...						
IX. Overlaying ...						
X. Violence ...						
XI. All other causes ...					1	1
Total ...	12	1	1		4	18

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES
NOTIFICATION IN AGE GROUPS

Table No. 3

DISEASE	Under 1 year											65 & to Total Hospital Deaths			
	1—	2—	3—	4—	5—	10—	15—	20—	35—	45—	—	—	8	1	Nil
Scarlet Fever ...	—	—	—	1	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	1	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	1	Nil
Measles ...	10	20	36	59	44	222	44	7	8	2	2	—	454	1	1
Whooping Cough ...	9	21	28	28	30	76	7	—	2	1	—	—	202	—	Nil
Erysipelas ...	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	2	1	1	7	—	Nil
Pneumonia ..	—	—	1	1	1	4	—	—	4	2	4	1	18	4	5
Infective Jaundice ...	—	—	—	1	—	6	4	3	3	1	7	1	26	—	Nil
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	3	Nil
Dysentery ..	1	1	3	2	5	1	—	2	1	—	—	—	16	—	Nil
Totals ...	21	42	68	93	83	312	58	12	21	9	14	3	736	7	6

MONTHLY INCIDENT OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASES, 1950 Table No. 4

(Other than Tuberculosis)

DISEASE	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
Scarlet Fever ...	—	1	—	3	2	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	8
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Measles ...	23	71	15	12	83	126	79	13	25	4	—	3	454
Whooping Cough ...	14	11	5	6	18	47	39	21	18	12	8	3	202
Erysipelas ...	1	—	1	1	—	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	7
Pneumonia ...	3	5	2	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	3	1	18
Infective Jaundice ..	7	3	2	3	—	4	2	—	1	1	2	1	26
Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	3
Dysentery ...	—	—	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	16
Totals ...	48	92	40	25	105	179	123	39	45	17	14	9	736

Table No. 5

New Cases of Deaths from Tuberculosis, 1950

NEW CASES

DEATHS

Age in years	Respiratory Male	Non-Respiratory Female	Respiratory Male	Non-Respiratory Female	Respiratory Male	Non-Respiratory Female	Respiratory Male	Non-Respiratory Female	Total
— 1			1				1		1
— 5		2							
—15				1					
—25	3	3							
—35	1	1				1			1
—45		1							
—55		1							
—65		1							
65 & over									
Totals	4	9	1	1		1	1		2

SECTION E

Report of Senior Sanitary Inspector

1. Record of Inspections

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting for your consideration my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1950.

Drainage and Sewerage	...	...	...	677
Housing	...	...	...	370
Refuse Collection and Disposal	...	...	...	401
Food and Food Premises	...	...	...	142
Water Supplies	...	...	...	15
Infectious Disease	...	...	...	37
Milk and Dairies	...	...	...	37
Movable Dwellings	...	...	...	47
Factories	...	...	...	48
Rat Infestations	...	...	...	63
Vermin	...	...	...	4
Building Licences	...	...	...	11
Keeping of Animals	...	...	...	13
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	135
				2000

2. Notices Served

The number of written notices served during the year was 55.

	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Complied with</i>	<i>From 1949</i>
HOUSING REPAIRS	18	6	10	15
DRAINAGE	9	2	6	5
New drainage and repairs to old systems, conversions of privvies to pail closets				
FOOD PREMISES	14	—	11	—
Structural repairs to walls, floors, ceiling. Provision of hot water, limewashing				
DIRTY CONDITIONS	4	1	5	1
WATER SUPPLY	—	—	—	—
MISCELLANEOUS	1	—	1	—
Keeping of animals				
Totals	46	9	33	22

In addition to these, verbal notice was sufficient in many cases to bring about required improvements or to secure the abatement of nuisances.

Those notices not yet entered as "Complied with" are still the subject of negotiation with persons concerned. Present day conditions affect particularly the rate at which necessary housing repairs are completed. To illustrate this the number of notices complied with in 1950, as a result of notices served in 1949 is given in the last column.

3. Complaints and Nuisances

334 complaints of a widely varied nature have been investigated. Housing defects and unsatisfactory drainage have been the main reasons for complaint, while nuisances from keeping of animals or from refuse accumulations are mentioned among others in the register.

In most cases abatement has been brought about by informal action, but it was necessary to serve 9 Statutory Notices.

Legal proceedings were taken against the owner of a cottage at Fincham, for failure to comply with a Statutory Notice, requiring the abatement of a nuisance.

The Magistrates imposed a fine and made a Nuisance Order, requiring certain structural repairs to be carried out within a given period. The Order was complied with.

4. Housing

Action was taken during the year in respect of 8 cottages and 1 railway carriage, used as a dwelling, unfit for human habitation, and not repairable at reasonable cost. In the case of the railway carriage an undertaking was given not to use for human habitation, but in the other eight cases the respective owners gave no form of undertaking and demolition orders were made.

Demolition of 4 of these is now in progress, a further 1 stands empty, while demolition of the remaining 3 cottages (forming a row) has so far been held up by the presence in one of them of a single person whose re-housing presents some difficulty. It is of credit to the Council that apart from this one person all other occupants were re-housed in Council Houses.

Repairs to 2 properties in respect of which undertakings were given by the owners in 1949 were abandoned and the cottages demolished.

Several cottages in respect of which demolition orders were made prior to 1950 still remain occupied, as also do several groups of cottages which were declared clearance areas in 1939. The acute shortage of houses makes it difficult to operate the provisions of the Housing Act in these cases at the present time. The condition of one such cottage, however, so deteriorated as to become dangerous and it was necessary to approve legal action to secure vacant possession of the dwelling. This action was pending at the end of the year.

A great deal of your Sanitary Inspectors' time is taken up in endeavouring to get essential repairs carried out to properties, many of which are condemnable.

5. Food Inspection

- (a) 142 visits were made to food premises during the year. As a result of informal action improvements were brought about at several premises to bring them up to the standard required by the Food & Drugs Act. Such improvements included:—

- Improvement of light and ventilation;
- Repair and cleansing of walls, floors and ceilings;
- Provision of hot and cold water, and facilities for personal washing;
- Provision of new preparation arrangements (fish friers);
- Paving of yards and provision of sinks and drainage.

All fried fish and chip premises (16), bakehouses (14), and retailers of ice cream (27) were visited, but inspection also of the remaining premises concerned with the handling and preparation of food for sale, i.e., cafes, butchers and grocers premises is most desirable. The Ministry of Food Model Bye-laws relating to the handling, wrapping, etc., of food were adopted by the Council during the year, but with these also, the pressure of other work has not allowed the publicising and enforcement desirable. A good deal of work is undoubtedly still required in this field.

- (b) At the end of the year there were 27 premises in the district at which ice cream is sold.

23 have been registered by the Council, registration of the remaining 4 being not required under existing law. Inspection of all of both classes does however take place. No manufacture of ice cream is carried on.

Seventeen samples of ice cream were taken with the following results :—

	No. of samples	GRADE			
		I	II	III	IV
Source "A"	5	5	—	—	—
„ "B"	3	—	—	2	1*
„ "C"	4	1	3	—	—
„ "D"	1	—	1	—	—
„ "E"	2	2	—	—	—
„ "F"	1	—	1	—	—
„ "G"	1	—	1	—	—
Totals	17	8	6	2	1

*unsatisfactory result taken up with retailer and producer.

The results may be regarded as satisfactory although considerably more samples should have been taken to have given a basis on which to judge fairly the hygienic quality of any one type of product. This should be possible in the coming year following the purchase of an insulated container for transmission in the manner recommended by the laboratory authorities, of samples for examination.

(c) The following food was condemned as being unfit for human consumption during the year :—

Tins or bottles of various foods ...	119
Cheese	19 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.
Beef	528 lbs.
Bacon	18 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.
Fish	14 lbs.

6. Milk and Dairies

No new dairies have been brought into use during the year, and with the removal of control over dairy farms in 1949, there has been little activity required in this branch.

One of the functions of the District Council under the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949, namely, action restraining the sale of milk from animals suspected of or found to be producing milk containing organisms of disease transmissible to man has however, been put into effect on five occasions.

As a result of sampling by the County Council the presence of *Brucella Abortus* was found in five separate milk supplies. Infected animals were isolated by individual sampling.

In each case with the co-operation of the Milk Marketing Board at Cambridge the infected milk was diverted for pasteurisation.

7. Movable Dwellings

Five licences to station and use movable dwellings were granted during the year (3 trailer caravans, 2 living vans on wheels). Of the 5 licences granted, 2 were renewals on application of licences granted in 1949.

1 application to use a site for movable dwellings was refused, on the grounds of inadequate provision of sanitary accommodation, water supply and means of disposal of refuse and waste water. Action was taken in 2 other cases, 1 of which involved the use of an unauthorised camping site. In both cases clearance of the sites was secured by informal action.

In 3 further cases action was incomplete, due to statements by the persons concerned that their stay was only to be temporary, being subsequently dishonoured and the great difficulty in a district of this size, of carrying out daily visits to prove existence on the site for a period exceeding that allowed, i.e., 6 weeks.

Generally speaking there has been little lack of co-operation from persons residing permanently in the district, the main difficulties being almost entirely experienced in the control of persons moving into the area for a temporary period to perform seasonal agricultural work. It can be fairly assumed that there will always be this difficulty with the latter class, unless, or until such time as, licensed sites with adequate provision of sanitary amenities are established at suitable points.

8. Public Cleansing

(a) REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

A fortnightly collection has been maintained in all parishes during the year. This was an improvement over the once-monthly system operating in 1949 and was made possible by bringing into use, at the beginning of the year, an additional vehicle purchased late in 1949. It is felt that the improvement in the service has been appreciated. At any rate the bulk of refuse dealt with has been considerably greater than in previous years and it is to the credit of the men employed that this extra bulk has been dealt with without any need for revision of the fortnightly programme aimed at.

The fact that at the majority of premises served proper covered dustbins are not provided continues to be a pressing problem needing solution. In addition to the most unsatisfactory position of having the countryside littered at regular intervals with refuse containers of all shapes and descriptions, there arise problems of a public health nature. Improper storage of house refuse encourages vermin and the task of the collectors is greatly multiplied when four or five various containers instead of one dustbin have to be emptied – particularly when the contents are soaked with rain through lack of proper cover. It is not to be wondered at that frequent complaints are received that the “refuse container” has been removed by mistake.

The refuse tips in regular use were at Shouldham, Wimbotsham, Watlington, Hilgay, Crimplesham and Feltwell. All these received regular attention but with existing transport it was not possible to provide sufficient "cover" to carry out proper controlled tipping methods. Towards the end of the year tipping at Crimplesham and Watlington was discontinued and the concentration of labour at the other tips and at a proposed new tip at Stoke Ferry should result in improved conditions.

Provision of hard roadways and/or sleeper tracks will remove the danger of vehicles becoming bogged down and will ensure consolidation of the refuse and attention to these requirements is necessary. If improvement can also be made in the provision of transport for the carting of soil to cover the refuse, conditions at the Tips will be approaching the standard recommended by the Ministry of Health. The Hilgay Tip and the proposed new tip at Stoke Ferry will be under the absolute control of the Department and indiscriminate dumping by other persons will be more easily controlled—this unsatisfactory practice will however remain a problem at the other tips.

(b) NIGHT SOIL COLLECTION AND CESSPOOL EMPTYING

The weekly emptying of pail closets in the parishes of Hilgay, Denver, Fincham, Downham West, Feltwell and at several properties at Nordelph was maintained during the year. Every effort is made to carry out this service without causing nuisance or offence to the public, although a service at night has not been possible. Disposal of pail closets contents in villages not served by the emptier continues to be by burial and some complaints of nuisance in this connection have been dealt with. It is to be earnestly hoped that the day is not too far distant when the provision of sewerage schemes to the villages will be possible, thus removing what is undoubtedly a major public health problem in this district, i.e., the disposal of sewage by conservancy methods. It may be mentioned at this point that the single vehicle at present in use is working to capacity and that the desirable extension of the service to other parishes would be wholly dependent upon the provision of further vehicles.

270 cesspools were emptied during the year, and included those serving Council and private houses. The service is available to all parts of the District and in view of the size of the area, the fact that requests are received from all parts, and that only one day per week is devoted to cesspool emptying, it will be appreciated that some delay in honouring a request for service must of necessity occur. It is of interest to note that the demand has been at a similar level as in 1949 when 251 cesspools were emptied.

Difficulty has been experienced where more than one house is drained to a common cesspool in obtaining agreement of all persons concerned to the payment of their proportion of the charge, and also where "hardship" grounds have been advanced as a reason for inability to pay to have the cesspool emptied. A solution has been found for the former point but the latter remains a problem.

9. Sewerage

The Council continued to maintain the ex-R.A.F. sewage disposal plants at Bexwell, Feltwell and Methwold, although use of the last mentioned was discontinued when the Glebe Site was de-requisitioned. The pumps at the Feltwell side of the Aerodrome have been in continuous use for a prolonged period and the decision to replace them with pumps in better condition and no longer required on the Glebe Site will result in considerable saving of time and labour now necessary to maintain them.

The Bexwell plant in addition to dealing with the sewage from the converted hutments, is also used for the disposal of night soil and cesspool contents, collected by the cesspool emptier.

Maintenance of sewage plants serving Council House sites at Wormegay, Wereham and Northwold has also been carried out and at the latter two, difficulties have been experienced in disposal of the effluent. At Northwold it would appear that the subsoil irrigation method of disposal has been wrongly applied—the plant should be capable of producing an effluent fit for direct discharge to an available river. At Wereham, in the absence of other sources of disposal, subsoil irrigation has been attempted but the heavy nature of the soil and inadequate disposal area have, so far, been obstacles to this method.

One of the main sources of trouble during the year has again been the problem of sewage disposal, particularly on Council Housing Sites. The construction of cesspools pending provision of proper sewage plants creates many difficulties, owing to the high level of sub-soil water in almost all parts of the district.

It is considered that Septic Tank installations of proper size and design to serve a number of properties should be provided in lieu of cesspools wherever possible. Every effort should be made to overcome financial and sanction difficulties. Cesspools cannot be made large enough to serve houses with a mains water supply.

Sub-soil irrigation is a method which is used extensively throughout the District, and it must be realised that on no account should this method be used where there is danger of contaminating underground water supplies, or where the level of the sub-soil water is high. No purification takes place in this method whatsoever, and a thorough examination of all other available disposal methods should be made before it is resorted to.

10. Water Supplies

Four samples were taken from two private wells and submitted for bacteriological examination by the Public Health Laboratory. All were reported unsatisfactory. Use of one well was discontinued and works were carried out to the second (a deep well) in an endeavour to secure an improvement pending the provision of a mains supply expected in that area.

A sample of mains water was taken at Ten Mile Bank following a complaint, and submitted to the Public Analyst for chemical and bacteriological examination. The Public Analyst reported the water entirely satisfactory and fit for drinking.

11. Disinfection and Disinfestation

Houses disinfected after cases of infectious disease numbered 24. The disinfectant used was Formaldehyde.

Heavy infestations of fleas at two separate premises were effectively eliminated.

Upon complaint, investigation revealed evidence only of an old bed-bug infestation at one cottage. The premises were however treated as a precautionary measure.

12. Destruction of Rats and Mice

With the coming into operation during the year of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949, consideration was given to the setting up of the Council's own Rodent Control Service to implement the provisions of the Act.

By the end of the year proposals had been made and agreed that a Rodent Operative, with suitable means of transport, should be employed and that he be given every facility for learning the approved methods of rodent destruction. Liaison with the Norfolk Agricultural Executive Committee had enabled information concerning existing farm contracts to be obtained and this will be extremely useful in organising the survey of the district.

While deliberation concerning the Council's Service continued the Norfolk Agricultural Executive Committee carried out destruction of rats in the area. The level of infestation remained generally high. The Council's refuse tips and sewage plants were amongst the places treated.

13. Dirty Premises

Six cases of dirty conditions in dwelling houses were discovered during the year. These cases were kept under observation and a reasonable standard of cleanliness was obtained without having to take legal action.

14. Factories

48 inspections were made and as a result several contraventions of the Act discovered. These were mainly in connection with sanitary accommodation and the necessary provision or improvements were secured informally.

A new register has been obtained and progress made in compiling it to replace the former register which was in need of revision. By the end of the year forty premises (37 "Power," 3 "Non-Power") had been inspected and recorded; 16 enquiry inspections had revealed that premises did not fall within the definition of "factory," and 24 premises remain to be visited.

15. Conclusion

Undoubtedly the most pressing need in the District at the present time is for improvement in methods and arrangements for sewage disposal. The problems met and the unsatisfactory conditions existing have been detailed in the report and every advantage should be taken and every support given to any attempt to improve matters.

Improvement of disposal arrangements and storage accommodation of refuse at dwelling houses are matters which should receive early attention.

With the remedying of the main problems more time will be available for other equally important matters such as Food Hygiene and Housing which at present cannot receive all the attention necessary.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

D. N. ROWSELL,

Acting Senior Sanitary Inspector

(Nov. 19th-Dec. 31st)

NOTE:—Mr. H. W. Nowell secured a new appointment and left the District on the 18th November, 1950, after five years service with the Council.

Much credit for any improvements mentioned in this report is therefore due to him, and my observations have, in many respects, been guided by my association with his work.

D. N. ROWSELL.

SECTION F

Report of Surveyor and Water Engineer

1. Water

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting my report for 1950.

There are three sources of water supply to the Rural District viz.: Northern Half by the Wisbech Waterworks Company whose supply is obtained from a well at Marham, Southern Half by the Downham R.D.C. Waterworks from a well at Feltwell and the Welney Area by the purchase in bulk of a supply from the Ely R.D.C.

The following table gives figures applicable only to the Feltwell source of supply from Denton Lodge Pumping Station which may be taken to represent an approximation of figures applicable to the Northern half of the district.

	1st Quarter	2nd	3rd	4th	Totals
Rainfall	6.14	10.78	6.28	7.45	30.65
	ins	ins.	ins	ins.	ins.
Consumption	24,886,000	26,205,000	26,004,000	24,275,000	101,370,000
	gallons	gallons	gallons	gallons	gallons
Depth of water	63.66	62	67.66	76	67.25
in well (average)	ft.	ft.	ft.	ft.	ft

During the year, quarterly samples of water from the well at Denton Lodge have been taken and sent to Messrs. Lincolne Sutton and Wood, of Norwich, for analysis. These have proved consistently good and I quote a typical report of the tests taken:—

“This water is of excellent quality both bacteriologically and chemically. It is pure and wholesome, and very suitable for drinking purposes.”

It is estimated that there are over 4,000 consumer properties within the District, of which more than 10% are industrial (mainly agriculture) and during the year as a result of minor extensions of water mains, a further 60 connections were made of which 10% was maintained for agriculture.

The Northern Area Scheme involving further Water Main Extensions serving ten parishes undertaken by the Wisbech Waterworks Company was virtually completed and the Contract for the Central Area Water Mains Extension Scheme involving seven further Parishes was signed.

The Parishes benefitting from these two projects are:—

NORTHERN AREA	CENTRAL AREA
Tottenham	Barton Bendish
Wormegay	Boughton
Wiggenhall St. Mary The Virgin	Hilgay
Wiggenhall St. Germans	Northwold
Shouldham	West Dereham
Shouldham Thorpe	Wereham
Runcton Holme	Welney
Fincham	
Watlington	
Stow Bardolph	

The completion of these two Schemes will result in a most comprehensive distribution of water within the Rural District Area.

2. Housing

Progress of the Post-War Housing Programme was maintained at a satisfactory rate during the year, details of which are shown in the following table:—

Position at			
		1st April, 1950	1st April, 1951
Traditional Houses	... ..	622	660
Pre-fabricated Houses	... ..	76	76
Temporary Houses	... ..	205	174
Requisitioned Houses	... ..	14	10
		— —	— —
Totals		917	920
		— —	— —

The 38 permanent houses which were completed during the year were situated as under:—

PARISH	NO. OF HOUSES
Feltwell	12
Marham	6
Northwold	6
Methwold Hythe	4
Stoke Ferry	4
Southery	2
Denver	2
Wereham	2
	—
Total	38
	—

A further 56 permanent houses were in course of construction at the end of March, 1951, with an additional 32 houses allocated to Sites and advertised for tender.

The reduction by 31 of temporary dwellings during the year is accounted for in the diminishing tendency for families to survive “squatting” conditions and partly due to the Council’s efforts towards re-housing, which will be observed from the following details:—

4 families transferred from temporary to permanent Council house accommodation;

5 families evicted;

22 families finding other accommodation by their own efforts.

—

31

—

In an effort to meet the heavy demand for housing accommodation at Methwold a scheme to convert redundant Air Ministry Huts to provide 25 dwelling units at Methwold Aerodrome was in course of preparation.

The demand for Council Housing accommodation is still very acute and despite the fact that a total of 52 families were rehoused during the year, the total number of live applications which were held at the close of the year was 521. From a perusal of the Parish waiting lists, Feltwell has the highest demand with a total of 55 separate applications. The Council has realised the need for houses in this Parish and has so far completed 18 permanent dwellings, 6 more are under construction and a further 10 are under contract, but not yet started.

Three T.B. patients were re-housed during the year.

I have the honour to be,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

H. BLAKEY,

Surveyor and Water Engineer.

